

Fastrack Revision

Main Points

► Rajkumar Shukla

- A peasant from Champaran
- Met Gandhi in 1916
- Insisted on Gandhi visiting his district

► Gandhiji's arrival at Muzzaffarpur and Champaran

- Sharecroppers from Champaran arrived in large numbers
- Lawyers briefed Gandhi about court cases
- Gandhi expressed unhappiness over lawyers' collecting high fee

► The problem

- Indigo – the chief commercial crop
- English landlords compelled Indian tenants to plant 15% of their holdings with indigo
- Entire indigo harvest surrendered as rent
- Development of synthetic indigo in Germany—hence no need to grow
- Sharecroppers compelled to pay compensation for being released from 15% arrangement

► Gandhiji's visit to a nearby village

- Occasion – maltreatment of a villager
- Official order – asked to return and quit
- Gandhiji's defiance – signed and wrote – he would disobey – received summons

► Drama outside the court

- Thousands of peasants gathered
- Gandhi asked to furnish bail – refused
- Lawyers offered to follow him to jail
- Officials inability to control crowd – sought Gandhi's help to control
- Finally case dropped – triumph of disobedience

► Enquiry into the farmers grievances

- Conducted by Gandhiji and lawyers
- 10,000 peasants deposed
- Gandhiji summoned by Lieutenant Governor – met four times
- Official commission of enquiry set – up
- Big planters to make refund – Gandhiji demanded 50% – final agreement on 25%
- Gandhi agreed – purpose not monetary but to make the landlords surrender a part of the money and the prestige both

► Rehabilitation of villages

- Disciples Mahadev Desai and Narhari Parikh and their wives volunteered to teach
- Opening of primary schools
- Kasturba taught personal hygiene and community sanitation
- Health services and necessary medicines

Summary at a Glance

► 'Indigo' is actually an excerpt from *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi* written by Louis Fischer. It is a detailed account of how Gandhiji initiated the departure of the Britishers from our motherland. It was December 1916 when Gandhi had gone to the annual convention of the Indian National Congress in Lucknow, when Rajkumar Shukla, a poor peasant from Champaran, came and insisted Gandhi on accompanying him to his district where the poor Indian peasants were being exploited by the British landlords. Gandhi already had his appointments in various places. But Rajkumar Shukla followed him everywhere. So impressed by his determination, Gandhi asked him to take him from Calcutta. Then two of them boarded a train to Patna, there Shukla led him to the house of Rajendra Prasad – a lawyer. Then, Gandhi decided to go to Muzzaffarpur to collect full information about the condition of peasants in Champaran. Professor J.B. Kripalani received Gandhi at the station along with a large body of students. Gandhi stayed for two days in the home of professor Malkani which was an extraordinary thing in those days for a government professor to give shelter to a man like Gandhi who was an advocate of Home Rule.

► As the news of Gandhi's arrival spread through Muzzaffarpur to Champaran, sharecroppers from Champaran arrived on foot to meet him. When the lawyers briefed Gandhi, he chided them for collecting high fee from the poor peasants. Most of the arable land in Champaran was owned by the English landlords. Indian farmers worked for them as tenants. They were asked to grow indigo on 15% of their land and surrender the entire harvest to them as rent. But when German synthetic indigo came in the market, the natural indigo lost its market value. So, the landlords asked the peasants to keep the harvest and pay them compensation. Here they were befooled. But when the peasants realised this they demanded the refund of the compensation amount.

► Gandhi met the secretary of the British landlords' association, but he refused to share any information. Gandhi then met the commissioner. He rather bullied him

and asked him to quit Champaran. Gandhi didn't obey. Gandhi then moved to Motihari where a huge crowd greeted him.

- Gandhi went to a nearby village where a peasant had been maltreated. Gandhi was asked to return to town. He was served with summons to quit Champaran. Gandhi wrote that he disobeyed the order. So, he was asked to appear in court next day. The next morning thousands of peasants demonstrated to support Gandhi. It was the beginning of their liberation from fear of the British. Now the officials felt helpless and sought the help of their leader to regulate the mob. The Government was confused and postponed the trial against Gandhi, which Gandhi protested. Gandhi told the court that he was in a 'conflict of duties'. On one hand he doesn't want to break the law and on the other he had to obey his conscience — to get justice to the poor sharecroppers. He preferred to obey the higher law – the voice of conscience.
- Rajendra Prasad and many other lawyers had arrived from Bihar. They decided to follow him into jail. It was then that

Gandhi exclaimed with joy that the battle of Champaran had been won.

- Several days later the Lieutenant Governor ordered the case to be dropped. Thus, the Civil Disobedience Movement had won for the first time.
- The Lieutenant Governor appointed an official enquiry into indigo sharecroppers case. Gandhi was the only representative of the peasants. There was enough evidence of illegal extortion of money from the peasants. Gandhi asked for 50% refund. But they offered only 25% which Gandhi agreed. At least the deadlock was broken. Gandhi reverted to the cultural and social backwardness of Champaran villages. His disciples and their wives volunteered for work.

Theme

- Thus Champaran episode proved to be a turning point in Gandhi's life. It paved way to other movements which ultimately resulted in the final liberation from Britishers. Peasants learnt to stand on their feet. They knew their rights. In this way Gandhi taught them the lesson of self-reliance.



Practice Exercise



Extract Based Questions

Directions: Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow:

1. When I first visited Gandhi in 1942 at his Ashram in Sevagram, in central India, he said, "I will tell you how it happened that I decided to urge the departure of the British. It was in 1917."

- (a) Who is 'I' in the first line?
- (b) Name the lesson.
 - (i) Indigo
 - (ii) On the Face of It
 - (iii) The Rattrap
 - (iv) Deep Water
- (c) The author of the given extract is:
 - (i) Mahatma Gandhi
 - (ii) Louis Fischer
 - (iii) Susan Hill
 - (iv) John Updike
- (d) Find a synonym for the word 'exit' from the above lines.
- (e) '..... I decided to urge'. Here 'I' is
- (f) When did the narrator first meet Gandhi?

Answers

- (a) Louis Fischer is 'I' in the first line.
- (b) (i) Indigo
- (c) (ii) Louis Fischer
- (d) A synonym for the word 'exit' from the above lines is 'departure'.
- (e) Mahatma Gandhi
- (f) The narrator first met Gandhi in 1942.

2. "A peasant came up to me looking like any other peasant in India, poor and emaciated and said, 'I am Rajkumar Shukla. I am from Champaran, and I want you to come to my district!'"

- (a) Whom does 'me' in the first line refer to?
 - (i) Rajkumar Shukla
 - (ii) Gandhi
 - (iii) Louis Fischer
 - (iv) Rajendra Prasad
- (b) Why did the peasant come to 'me'?
- (c) Rajkumar Shukla was:
 - (i) tall and stout
 - (ii) weak and short
 - (iii) poor and weak
 - (iv) None of these
- (d) The synonym for the word 'farmer' from the given extract is
- (e) When did the above incident happen?
- (f) Where did the above incident happen?

Answers

- (a) (ii) Gandhi
 - (b) Because he wanted him to come to his district.
 - (c) (iii) poor and weak
 - (d) peasant
 - (e) The above incident happened in December 1916.
 - (f) The above incident happened in Lucknow.
3. He was illiterate but resolute. He had come to the Congress session to complain about the injustice of the landlord system in Bihar.
- (a) Who was illiterate?
 - (i) Edla
 - (ii) Mahadev
 - (iii) Rajkumar Shukla
 - (iv) None of these

- (b) Where was the Congress session going on?
 (i) Champaran (ii) Kanpur
 (iii) Calcutta (iv) Lucknow
- (c) Why had he come to the Congress session?
- (d) A synonym of the word 'firm' from the extract is
- (e) Where did 'he' live?
- (f) Who is the narrator?

Answers

- (a) (iii) Rajkumar Shukla
 (b) (iv) Lucknow
 (c) To complain about the Injustice of the landlord system in Bihar.
 (d) resolute
 (e) He lived in Champaran.
 (f) Louis Fischer is the narrator.
4. "Fix a date," he begged. Impressed by the sharecropper's tenacity and story, Gandhi said, "I have to be in Calcutta on such-and-such a date. Come and meet me and take me from there."
- (a) 'He' in the first line is
- (b) Why did 'he' want to fix a date?
 (i) He wanted to make arrangement for a meeting with his co-sharecroppers
 (ii) He wanted to talk to the British landlords
 (iii) He wanted to take Gandhi to Champaran
 (iv) None of the above
- (c) Who is impressed by whose tenacity?
 (i) Rajkumar Shukla by Gandhi's
 (ii) Gandhi by Rajkumar Shukla's
 (iii) Gandhi by Kripalani's
 (iv) None of the above
- (d) Find a synonym of the word 'persistence' from the above extract.
- (e) Why was Gandhi impressed by the sharecropper?
- (f) Did the sharecropper manage to take Gandhi with him?

Answers

- (a) Rajkumar Shukla
 (b) (iii) He wanted to take Gandhi to Champaran
 (c) (ii) Gandhi by Rajkumar Shukla's
 (d) A synonym of the word 'persistence' from the above extract is tenacity.
 (e) Gandhi was impressed by the sharecropper's tenacity as he accompanied him everywhere.
 (f) Yes, the sharecropper managed to take Gandhi with him to Champaran.
5. but the servants knew Shukla was a poor yeoman who pestered their master to help the indigo sharecroppers. So, they let him stay on the grounds with his companion.

- (a) Whose 'servants' are being talked about?
 (i) Gandhi's (ii) Rajendra Prasad's
 (iii) J.B. Kripalani's (iv) Rajkumar Shukla's
- (b) Who is 'their master' mentioned in these lines?
 (i) Gandhi (ii) British Landlord
 (iii) Magistrate (iv) None of these
- (c) The yeoman's companion is
- (d) How were the two treated?
- (e) What does 'pester' mean?
- (f) Where did this incident happen?

Answers

- (a) (ii) Rajendra Prasad's
 (b) (iv) None of these
 (c) Gandhi
 (d) The two were insulted and asked to stay on the ground.
 (e) Pester means to annoy somebody.
 (f) This incident happened in Patna.
6. Sharecroppers from Champaran began arriving on foot and by conveyance to see their champion. Muzzafarpur lawyers called on Gandhi to brief him; they frequently represented peasant groups in court; they told him about their cases and reported the size of their fee.
- (a) Who is 'their champion'?
 (i) Rajkumar Shukla
 (ii) Gandhi
 (iii) A British official
 (iv) Rajendra Prasad
- (b) Why did Muzzafarpur lawyers call on Gandhi?
- (c) How did Gandhi react after knowing the size of the lawyers' fee?
 (i) Gandhi appreciated the lawyers
 (ii) Gandhi thanked the lawyers
 (iii) Gandhi chided the lawyers
 (iv) None of the above
- (d) A word from the extract which means 'transport' is
- (e) Give an antonym of 'frequently'.
- (f) Name the lesson from which the above extract has been taken.

Answers

- (a) (ii) Gandhi
 (b) To inform about the peasant's cases and fee charged from them.
 (c) (iii) Gandhi chided the lawyers
 (d) conveyance
 (e) An antonym of 'frequently' is rarely.
 (f) The above extract has been taken from the lesson 'Indigo'.

7. The officials felt powerless without Gandhi's cooperation. He helped them regulate the crowd. He was polite and friendly. He was giving them concrete proof that their might, hitherto dreaded and unquestioned, could be challenged by Indians. The government was baffled.

- (a) Find a word from the extract which means 'confused'.
- (b) Choose the antonym of 'cooperation'.
 - (i) Assistance (ii) Aid
 - (iii) Hindrance (iv) Service
- (c) What does 'regulated' mean here?
 - (i) Punish (ii) Control
 - (iii) Gather (iv) Disperse
- (d) 'Them' stands for
- (e) Whom does 'he' refer to?
- (f) Where did the incident take place?

Answers

- (a) Baffled
 - (b) (iii) Hindrance
 - (c) (ii) Control
 - (d) the British officials
 - (e) 'He' refers to Mahatma Gandhi.
 - (f) The incident took place in a court in Motihari.
8. 'They thought, amongst themselves, that Gandhi was totally a stranger, and yet he was prepared to go to prison for the sake of the peasants; if they, on the other hand, being not only residents of the adjoining districts but also those who claimed to have served these peasants, should go home, it would be shameful desertion.'
- (a) Which word is the antonym of 'familiar' in the extract?
 - (b) 'They' did not include:
 - (i) Brij Kishor
 - (ii) Maulana Mazharul Huq
 - (iii) Jawaharlal Nehru
 - (iv) Rajendra Prasad
 - (c) Choose the synonym of 'desertion'.
 - (i) Approval (ii) Assistance
 - (iii) Abandonment (iv) Aid
 - (d) Whom does 'they' refer to?
 - (e) From where did 'they' arrive?
 - (f) Find a word from the extract which means 'nearby'.

Answers

- (a) Stranger
- (b) (iii) Jawaharlal Nehru
- (c) (iii) Abandonment
- (d) 'They' refers to the lawyers.
- (e) They arrived from Bihar.
- (f) Adjoining

9. Gandhi remained in Champaran for an initial uninterrupted period of seven months and then again for several shorter visits. The visit, undertaken casually on the entreaty of an unlettered peasant in the expectation that it would last a few days, occupied almost a year of Gandhi's life.

- (a) Find an antonym, from the extract, for 'highly educated person'.
- (b) Choose the synonym of 'initial'.
 - (i) Introductory (ii) Following
 - (iii) Subordinate (iv) Final
- (c) Who is the author?
 - (i) William Douglas (ii) A.R. Barton
 - (iii) Louis Fischer (iv) Anees Jung
- (d) Who is referred to as an 'unlettered peasant' in the extract?
- (e) How long did Gandhi initially stay in Champaran?
- (f) 'Entreaty' means

Answers

- (a) Unlettered
 - (b) (i) Introductory
 - (c) (iii) Louis Fischer
 - (d) Rajkumar Shukla is referred to as an 'unlettered peasant' in the extract.
 - (e) Gandhi initially stayed in Champaran for seven months.
 - (f) an earnest or humble request
10. the next morning he started out on the back of an elephant. He had not proceeded far when the police superintendent's messenger overtook him and ordered him to return to town in his carriage.
- (a) Why did 'he' start out?
 - (b) How did 'he' react to the messenger?
 - (i) He opposed (ii) He complied
 - (iii) He chided him (iv) None of these
 - (c) Choose the antonym of 'proceeded'.
 - (i) Retreated (ii) Led
 - (iii) Progressed (iv) Marched
 - (d) The messenger drove Gandhi home and
 - (e) Who started on the back of the elephant?
 - (f) Who overtook him?

Answers

- (a) 'He' started out to see a peasant who had been maltreated.
- (b) (ii) He complied
- (c) (i) Retreated
- (d) served him with an official notice
- (e) Gandhi started on the back of the elephant.
- (f) A messenger of the police superintendent overtook him.



Short Answer Type Questions

Q 1. Why is Rajkumar Shukla described as being 'resolute'?

(CBSE 2020, NCERT)

Or

How did Rajkumar Shukla establish that he was resolute? (CBSE 2015)

Ans. Rajkumar Shukla was one of the sharecroppers of Champaran who fell victims to the authoritarian attitude of the British landlords. He came to invite Gandhi to visit Champaran. When Gandhi told him about his commitments in various places on various dates, he didn't give up. Rather he followed Gandhi wherever he went. Eventually Gandhi had to accompany him to Champaran. This was the result of his being resolute.

Q 2. Why do you think the servants thought Gandhi to be another peasant at Rajendra Prasad's house? (NCERT)

Ans. Rajkumar Shukla frequently visited Rajendra Prasad's house, so the servants were quite familiar with him. When Gandhi accompanied him and since he was dressed up in loincloth, they mistook him for a peasant like Rajkumar Shukla. His simplicity and humility made them to mistake his identity.

Q 3. Why could Gandhi not accompany Shukla to Champaran immediately?

Ans. Gandhi couldn't manage to accompany Shukla immediately due to his prior engagements. He was scheduled for Cawnpore and he had to visit several places of India. It was only after his visit to Calcutta, Patna and Muzzafarpur that he was able to make it to Champaran.

Q 4. What did the Indian peasants pay the British landlords as rent? What did the British planters now want instead and why? (NCERT)

Ans. The Indian peasants paid the entire harvest of Indigo grown by them on 15% of their land to the British landlords as rent. Now when Germany had developed a synthetic Indigo, the price of the natural Indigo had a steep fall. The landlords cunningly wanted to give up this arrangement and get a compensation for releasing the farmer's land.

Q 5. Why did Gandhiji agree to a settlement of 25% refund to the farmers? (NCERT)

Or

Why did Gandhiji agree to a settlement of mere 25%? (CBSE 2016)

Or

'The settlement given to the sharecroppers was symbolic'. Justify why Gandhi thought so.

(CBSE 2022 Term-2)

Ans. Initially Gandhiji had asked for a refund of 50% but he agreed with a settlement of 25% refund. This way, Gandhiji thought that the deadlock between the peasants and the landlords would be broken.

Moreover, what mattered more to Gandhiji was not money but the moral victory of the farmers in making the landlords surrender before them.

Q 6. How did the Champaran episode change the plight of the peasants?

Or

Why is the Champaran episode considered to be the beginning of the Indian struggle for independence? (CBSE 2019)

Ans. Champaran episode changed the destiny of the poor peasants of Champaran. It dispelled the mortal fear of the British landlords and made them learn about their rights. Apart from getting back 25% of the compensation amount, they also learnt courage. The episode marked the beginning of the cultural, social and economic transformation of the poor peasants.

Q 7. Why do you think Gandhiji considered the Champaran episode to be a turning point in his life? (CBSE 2019)

Ans. What began as a mere attempt to fight injustice against the hapless peasants and to alleviate their sufferings, later turned out to be Gandhiji's loud and clear pronouncement that Britishers could not order him about in his own country. It instilled courage in the meek and mute masses. This episode laid a pathway to the other movements which compelled the Britishers to quit forever.

Q 8. Why did Gandhiji not accept C.F. Andrews help during the Champaran Movement? (CBSE 2019)

Or

Why was Gandhiji opposed to C.F. Andrews helping him in Champaran? (CBSE 2016)

Ans. Gandhiji's convincing argumentation and logical approach deeply influenced the lawyers. Chiding them for charging high fee from the poor peasants, a step forward was to encourage them to court arrest for the sake of poor peasants, if he himself got imprisoned. He dissuaded them from seeking Mr. C.F. Andrews, an Englishman, help in their battle against the Britishers in order to be self-reliant.

Q 9. What was the attitude of the average Indian in smaller localities towards the advocates of 'Home Rule'? (NCERT)

Ans. Indians living in smaller localities were scared of the Britishers. Therefore, they hesitated to show any kind of sympathy or concern to the advocates of 'Home Rule'. Only a few could have the courage to harbour these advocates.

Q 10. How do you know that ordinary people also contributed to the freedom movement?

Ans. The freedom movement of India is not merely a saga of contribution of the prominent patriots whose sacrifices are exposed off and on. Thousands of ordinary people like Rajkumar Shukla fought fearlessly against the British tyranny and made their

bit of contribution to the struggle. The fact that they came in thousands to greet and support Gandhi speaks of their solidarity which finally resulted in India's freedom from the British rule.

Q 11. "Freedom from fear is more important than legal justice for the poor". Comment.

Ans. Obtaining legal justice may fetch a benefit for a limited extent. In other words, legal justice is mundane whereas freedom from the fear of the authority is cosmic. As in the case of Champaran episode, it brought about a perpetual attitudinal change that helped the peasants to stand on their own feet with an untold confidence.

Q 12. Who was Rajkumar Shukla? What do you know about him from the chapter 'Indigo'?

Or

As the host of a talk show, introduce Rajkumar Shukla to the audience by stating his qualities.

(CBSE SQP 2021 Term-1)

Or

Describe the role of Rajkumar Shukla in Indigo.

(CBSE 2023)

Ans. Rajkumar Shukla was a poor, illiterate, emaciated and oppressed peasant. He came all the way from Champaran to meet Gandhi to secure justice for the indigo sharecroppers of the area. The tenacity of this resolute man impressed Gandhi so much that he decided to fight for the farmers' cause and won them justice and self-reliance.

Q 13. What were the problems, the sharecroppers of indigo were facing in Champaran?

Or

What was the contract between the sharecroppers of Champaran and their British landlords?

(CBSE 2020)

Ans. The Champaran sharecroppers were the victims of landlord system in Bihar. In fact most of the arable land in Champaran belonged to the British landlords who forced the Indian peasants to plant indigo on 15% of their holdings. They demanded the entire harvest as rent, thereby adding to their misery and poverty.

Q 14. Why did Gandhi visit Muzzafarpur on his way to Champaran? Who received him there?

Ans. Rajkumar Shukla gave Gandhi the detailed account of the injustice inflicted on the poor peasant by the English landlords. However, Gandhi was not fully satisfied, so he stopped at Muzzafarpur to gather more information from the lawyers of Muzzafarpur about the problems at Champaran. J.B. Kripalani, a professor of Arts College came to receive Gandhi along with a large body of students.

Q 15. Why did Gandhiji chide the Muzzafarpur lawyers? What did he eventually decide about the course of action to be taken to help out the indigo sharecroppers?

Ans. Gandhiji chided the Muzzafarpur lawyers for charging heavy amount of fees from the poor peasants for fighting their cases in the court. So, Gandhi decided not to take their cases to the law courts. What he felt was needed to relieve those peasants from the fear of the British landlords which was gradually consuming their spirits.

Q 16. What made the British landlords obtain agreement from the peasants to pay them a compensation amount for being released from 15% agreement?

Ans. The advent of synthetic indigo developed by Germany, brought the market value of the natural indigo adversely down. So, the British landlords, who were quite cunning and calculative, impressed upon the innocent peasants to enter into an agreement with them to pay compensation for releasing them from 15% arrangement as they found that the land was of no use for them now.

Q 17. What made the peasants, who had entered into agreement with the British landlords to pay compensation, demand their money back from the British landlords?

Ans. After having paid the compensation amount to the British landlords the poor peasants learnt that they had been be fooled by the landlords, as the agricultural indigo was of no market value due to the introduction of synthetic indigo. They felt cheated. So, they demanded their money back.

Q 18. Why did Gandhiji meet the secretary of the British landlord's association on arriving in Champaran? What was the result?

Ans. As Gandhiji was quite transparent, fair and just in his approach, he decided to get the complete facts and understand what was going on among landlords. So, he met their secretary. But this proved to be of no avail as the secretary straightaway refused to give any information to 'an outsider'.

Q 19. Why did Gandhiji call upon the British official commissioner of the Tirhut division? What was the outcome of this meeting?

Ans. The apathetic and dry attitude of the secretary of the British landlords association impelled Gandhiji to contact the official commissioner of the Tirhut division. Like his meeting with the secretary of the landlord's association, this also proved futile as the authoritarian commissioner tried to bully Gandhiji and advised him to leave Tirhut.

Q 20. Give a brief account of the reception that Gandhiji got in Motihari?

Ans. When Gandhiji was bullied by the British official commissioner and was advised to leave Tirhut, he ignored his instructions and proceeded to Motihari. People received him with great enthusiasm and zeal. However, he was stopped from visiting a nearby village by the police and later served an official notice to quit Champaran.

Q 21. How were the Britishers shown that their dreaded and unquestioned authority could be challenged by the Indians?

Or

In the Motihari court, what caused the delay in the trial? (CBSE 2022 Term-2)

Ans. When Gandhiji refused to obey the official order to quit Champaran, he was summoned to the court in Motihari. The peasants flocked in thousands to support Gandhiji. The crowd became out of control and the government was baffled. The show of strength and solidarity showed that the British were no longer dreaded by the Indians and their authority can be challenged.

Q 22. What argument did Gandhiji give to the British government for not complying with the orders to quit Champaran?

Ans. Gandhiji told the court in a 'conflict of duties' on the one hand, not to set a bad example as a law breaker; on the other hand to render the 'humanitarian and national service' for which he had come. He disregarded the order to leave not for want of respect to the lawful authority but in obedience to the higher law of our being, the voice of conscience, for which he is ready to accept any legal punishment.

Q 23. What made Mahatma Gandhi declare 'the battle of Champaran is won'?

Or

When Gandhiji got the whole hearted support of the lawyers, he said, 'the battle of Champaran is won'. What was the essence behind his statement?

Ans. Earlier, the lawyers who had come from Bihar to confer with Gandhi, seemed reluctant on the subject of going to jail. When they found that Gandhiji being a total stranger to the land, was ready to go to jail, they felt ashamed and decided to reconsider their decision about their course of action in the event of Gandhiji's arrest and volunteered to court arrest for the cause of the sharecroppers. Gandhi at this point exclaimed with joy and said 'the battle of Champaran is won'.

Q 24. Why did Gandhiji continue his stay in Champaran even after the sharecroppers issue was resolved?

Ans. Gandhi never contented himself with large political or economic solutions. This was the typical Gandhi pattern his politics were intertwined with the practical, day-to-day problems of the millions. He saw the cultural and social backwardness in the Champaran villages and wanted to do something about it immediately.

Q 25. How did Gandhiji keep a distant watch on the Ashram?

Ans. While Gandhiji was busy in his mission of uplifting the poor and the backward villages of Champaran, Gandhi kept a long distance watch on the Ashram. He sent regular instructions by mail and asked for the financial accounts. He also gave instructions on what to do and what not to do. For instance, he ordered the digging of new latrine trenches and filling of the old ones, lest they should begin to stink.

Q 26. Why did Gandhiji oppose the idea of requesting the English pacifist Freer Andrews to stay on in Champaran?

Ans. When Charles Freer Andrews, the devoted follower of the Mahatma came to bid farewell to Gandhi before going on a duty tour, Gandhi's lawyer friends came up with the idea for Andrews to stay in Champaran to help them. Gandhi bitterly opposed this idea saying that, it would show the weakness of our heart. We must rely upon ourselves to win the battle.

Q 27. What made Gandhi urge the departure of the British?

Ans. In the course of procuring justice for the oppressed farmers of Champaran, Gandhi clashed with the British authorities time and again. First with the secretary of the landlord's association then with the British official commissioner. Finally he disobeyed the court itself, and was supported by a multitude of Indians so, by and by, he decided to urge their departure as he felt they had no business to order about the Indians in their own country.

Q 28. What does Gandhi refer to as 'conflict of duties'?

(CBSE 2023)

Ans. Gandhi refers to 'conflict of duties' as a situation where a person has to choose between different moral obligations or duties. If he fulfils one duty, the other will be neglected. Gandhi was involved in 'conflict of duties' as—on the one hand, not to set a bad example as a lawbreaker; on the other hand, to render the 'humanitarian and national service'.

Q 29. What can be inferred from Rajendra Prasad's recorded upshot of the lawyers consultations, at Motihari?

[Reference: *The senior lawyer replied, they had come to advise and help him; if he went to jail there would be nobody to advise and they would go home. What about the injustice to the sharecroppers, Gandhi demanded.*]

(CBSE SQP 2023-24)

Ans. From Rajendra Prasad's recorded upshot of the lawyer's consultations, at Motihari, we can infer the following points:

- (i) It highlights the idea that the lawyers were conscious of the potential shame they would bring upon themselves if they deserted the peasants in their time of need.
- (ii) Despite being a stranger to the region, Gandhi's commitment to the cause of the peasants was exemplary and motivated the lawyers to continue their support.



Long Answer Type Questions

Q 1. What was the dispute between the landlords and the Champaran peasants? What role did Gandhi play in resolving the dispute successfully?

Ans. The peasants had been working on the fields to grow Indigo on the 15% of their holdings. Under an agreement they were giving the entire harvest to the

British landlords as rent. But when the synthetic indigo was developed, the landlords withdrew the agreement and took compensation from the peasants in return. But when the peasants learnt about the synthetic indigo, they could see through the manipulative game of the landlords. They now realised that the British had extorted compensation amount from them illegally and deceitfully. They demanded their money back but the landlords silenced them with their power. It was at this point that Gandhiji arrived at Champaran. He studied their case meticulously and deeply. His detailed investigations, documentation and collection of evidence became the cause of concern for the authorities. Consequently Edwards Gait, the Lt. Governor of Bihar summoned Gandhiji and after four interviews with him constituted a commission of inquiry which comprised of landlords, government officials and Gandhiji as the representative of the Indian peasants. Gandhi's diligent collection of evidence made the British government agree on refunding money. Gandhi demanded 50% of the compensation but it was settled on 25% refund and Gandhi accepted it. Taking it to be a victory of principle, he thought that amount was less important than the part of their prestige which they surrendered to the peasants. This was how the issue was resolved.

Q 2. Why did Gandhi's casual visit to Champaran get extended to over a year?

Or

How did Gandhiji succeed in getting justice for the indigo sharecroppers? (CBSE SQP 2019)

Ans. Impressed by Rajkumar Shukla's tenacity Gandhi came to Champaran with the purpose to look into the grievances of the oppressed indigo sharecroppers. Being meticulous Gandhi looked into the matter right from the beginning gathering information from every corner possible to him, viz., the lawyers and the laymen who were the actual sufferers. He also met the secretary of the English landlord's association as well as the official commissioner of the Tirhut division to seek their view point. When they failed to put Gandhiji off, he continued to conduct his inquiry which was quite time-consuming. Thousands of depositions were written, documents and evidences were collected. From April to June, Gandhiji worked untiringly. Then after four protracted interviews with Gandhi the Lt. Governor constituted a commission of inquiry where the deadlock of the issue of compensation money was broken and the farmers got 25% refund. Next Gandhiji took upon himself the task of looking into the health conditions and social and cultural backwardness of the villages. In this way all his commitments were quite time-consuming. So, his casual visit to Champaran extended to over a year.

Q 3. What did Gandhi do with regard to the cultural and social backwardness in the Champaran villages?

Or

Gandhi not only alleviated the economic conditions of the Champaran people but also their social and cultural background. Justify. (CBSE 2022 Term-2)

Ans. Gandhi got the issue of sharecroppers resolved. But he never contented himself with large political and economic solutions. When he saw the cultural and social backwardness in Champaran villages, he had an inner urge to do something about it at once. He appealed for teachers, Mahadev Desai and Narhari Parikh, the disciples of Gandhi and their wives volunteered for the work. Devadas, Gandhi's youngest son arrived from Ashram along with Mrs. Gandhi. They rendered their services in six primary school which were opened. Kasturbai taught the Ashram rules on personal cleanliness and community sanitation. To improve health conditions, Gandhi got a doctor who volunteered his services for six months. Kasturbai talked to the local women about the importance of personal hygiene. In this way, Gandhi began the mammoth task of rebuilding the nation.

Q 4. How did civil disobedience triumph in Champaran episode?

Or

Ans. The civil disobedience came out victorious in Champaran episode. Gandhi visited Champaran to redress the grievances of the poor peasants. He was received by a huge multitude of people who greeted him as their Champion. When Gandhi was on his way to a nearby village from Motihari, he was served an official notice to quit Champaran immediately. To the utter disgust of the British authorities, he returned the notice with a written remark that he would 'disobey' it. This was just the beginning of civil disobedience.

As a result of this disobedience, he was ordered to appear in the court next day. The crowd that thronged the court room was totally unmanageable. The helpless officials had to seek cooperation from their leader-Gandhiji. Sensing the public outrage, the magistrate had to adjourn the court for two hours and asked Gandhiji to furnish a bail which also Gandhi refused to furnish. Then, he released Gandhiji without the bail and the case was postponed. Then finally the case was dropped by Lt. Governor himself and sharecropping disappeared. In this way, the civil disobedience triumphed.

Q 5. What idea do you get about Gandhiji from the chapter 'Indigo' by Louis Fischer?

Or

Bring out the unassuming character traits of Gandhiji as described in the chapter 'Indigo'.

Ans. The chapter 'Indigo' authored by an English 'Louis Fischer' highlights the sterling traits of Gandhiji's

multifarious personality wherever he went. he attracted a huge multitude of people. He was so humble and unassuming that he came to Champaran at the request of a mere peasant. Gandhiji's comment on the victory of civil disobedience. "What I did was a very ordinary thing", also speaks of his unpretentiousness.

Another quality which becomes conspicuous in the episode was that he always focused on solution instead of the problem. His untiring efforts coupled with this attitude helped him change the plight of the sharecroppers. The crushing heap of evidences, about ten thousand depositions, countless documents that he got prepared, eventually impelled the Britishers to partially refund the peasants money.

Intrepid as he was by nature, he was never intimidated by the Britishers. On being served the summons to leave Champaran, he bluntly disobeyed. Judicious and discreet he was, as he kept in mind the long-term impacts instead of running after short-term gains. Therefore, he broke the deadlock and accepted 25% of the refund money. This way he taught the peasants courage.

Gandhiji's communicative skills impressed the Britishers and made the lawyers agree with his view point.

Q 6. Why do you think that Gandhi considered the Champaran episode as a turning point in his life?

Or

Why is the Champaran episode considered as the beginning of the Indian struggle for independence?

(CBSE 2023)

Ans. Gandhiji considered the Champaran episode to be a turning point in his life because it did not begin as an act of defiance, it rather grew out of an attempt to alleviate the distress of large numbers of poor peasants. This episode released the peasants from the mortal fear of British landlords and made them aware of their rights. They learnt the meaning of courage and self-confidence.

This episode proved to be the beginning of the cultural, social and economic transformation of the poor. This was an attempt to fight injustice. So, it ignited the fire of patriotism among Indians which paved the path of further movements which culminated in the final freedom of India from the chains of slavery.

Q 7. Why did Gandhiji considered freedom from fear more important than legal justice for the poor peasants of Champaran?

Ans. The ruthless exploitation of the poor farmers by the British landlords of Champaran prompted the farmers

to fight endless legal battles against the landlords with the help of eminent lawyers. However, all their battles were of no avail. Terror stricken peasants had no voice, no respite in the courts against the unfair dealings of the landlords. When Gandhi appeared on the scene and viewed the entire situation and declared that there was no point in getting into litigations as law courts would hardly be able to do justice to the peasants. He felt the need to teach these peasants the lesson of being courageous and self-reliant. He realised that unless and until, they conquered the fear of the Britishers, they would never experience any sense of relief. Therefore, he gave first priority to empowering and emboldening the peasants rather than waging legal battles for them.

The entire Champaran episode shows that it was freedom from fear that made things possible to achieve.

Q 8. How did the court scene at Motihari change the course of India's struggle for freedom? *(CBSE 2020)*

Ans. When Gandhi arrived Champaran to resolve the issue of poor sharecroppers, he began with finding the facts. First he visited the secretary of the British landlord's association who, thinking him to be an outsider, refused to give any information. Next he called on the British official commissioner of the Tirhut division in which the Champaran district lay. The commissioner bullied him and advised him to leave Tirhut. But Gandhi instead of leaving proceeded to Motihari, the Capital of Champaran where he was greeted by a vast multitude. Here he set-up his headquarters and continued his investigations. He was reported that a peasant had been maltreated in a nearby village. Gandhi decided to go and see, but the police superintendent's messenger overtook him and ordered him to return to the town, where he served him an official notice to quit Champaran immediately. Gandhi disobeyed in writing. He received a notice to appear in court next day.

The morning found the town of Motihari black with people. People arrived in thousands to help Gandhi. Their spontaneous demonstration, in thousands, around the courthouse changed the entire course of India's struggle for freedom. The officials felt powerless without Gandhi's cooperation. Later, the case was dropped and civil disobedience triumphed. Thus, the court scene at Motihari changed the course of India's struggle for freedom as it marked the beginning of their liberation from fear of the British.



Chapter Test

Extract Based Question

Q 1. "Thinking probably that he would not give way, the representative of the planters offered to refund to the extent of 25 per cent, and to his amazement Mr Gandhi took him at his word, thus breaking the dead lock."

- (a) The author of this lesson is
- (b) The 'Englishman' has come to:
 - (i) warn the people of ashram
 - (ii) bid Gandhi farewell
 - (iii) arrest Gandhi
 - (iv) None of the above
- (c) Who is 'he' in the first sentence?
 - (i) Rajendra Prasad (ii) The secretary
 - (iii) Mahatma Gandhi (iv) Mahadev Desai
- (d) Who is/are being addressed here?
- (e) Whom does 'an Englishman' refer to?

- (f) Find a word from the extract which is an antonym of 'unlikely'.

Short Answer Type Questions

- Q 2. How was Gandhiji able to influence the lawyers? Give instances.
- Q 3. What was the impact of synthetic indigo on the peasants?
- Q 4. How and when was Gandhi received at the Muzzafarpur station?

Long Answer Type Questions

- Q 5. Discuss the importance of Gandhi's visit to Motihari in the context of India's struggle for freedom.
- Q 6. How did Gandhi secure justice for oppressed sharecroppers?